referred to Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction, New Delhi and the matter is pending there; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABH BHAI RAMJIBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. M/s Ernst & Young have been appointed as Global Advisor for disinvestment. Expression of interest in BWEL was invited on 11.02.2002, in response to which only one party responded.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir, the last hearing was held in BIFR on 6.3.2002, in which BIFR was informed about the disinvestment exercise. BIFR has asked BWEL to submit an updated application.

VRS for PSU employees

†3007. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are forcing the employees of PSUs to opt for VRS;

(b) if so, the details of such PSUs; and

(c) the reasons for forcing the employees to opt for VRS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABH BHAI RAMJIBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Removal of capitalisation norms for vehicles

3008. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are proposing to do

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

away with the minimum capitalisation norm of US$ 100 million for cars and US$ 25 million for two and three wheelers;

(b) if so, the reasons for removing the capitalisation norms; and

(c) the measures Government are taking or the incentives that Government are giving or proposing to give to the vehicles operating with batteries or other non-conventional fuels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABH BHAI RAMJIBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) and (b) In respect of joint ventures of car manufacturing units involving majority foreign equity ownership, a minimum foreign equity of US$ 50 million was required. This requirement was however removed with the removal of Quantitative Restrictions *w.e.f.*, 1.4.2001.

(c) As per Auto Policy, announced by the Government on 7.3.2002, an appropriate long term fiscal structure shall be put in place to facilitate the acceptance and development of hybrid and Battery Operated Vehicles (BOVs). Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources (MNES) is promoting the development and manufacture of non-polluting environmentally benign Battery Operated Vehicles in the country under the Alternative Fuels for Surface Transportation (AFST) programme. They are providing subsidy on the battery driven 10-seater and bigger passenger vehicles upto 50 per cent of the cost of the vehicles exclusive of customs duty, sales tax and all other levies.

Steps to improve the working of loss making PSEs

3009. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government have taken during the last one year to make the loss incurring Public Sector Enterprises viable;

(b) the number of PSEs which are still loss making; and

(c) the action proposed to improve their working?